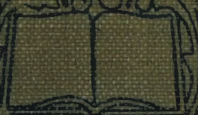
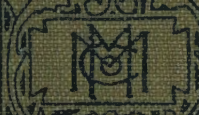
CARLYLE'S ESSAY ON BURNS





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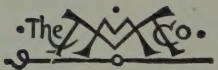

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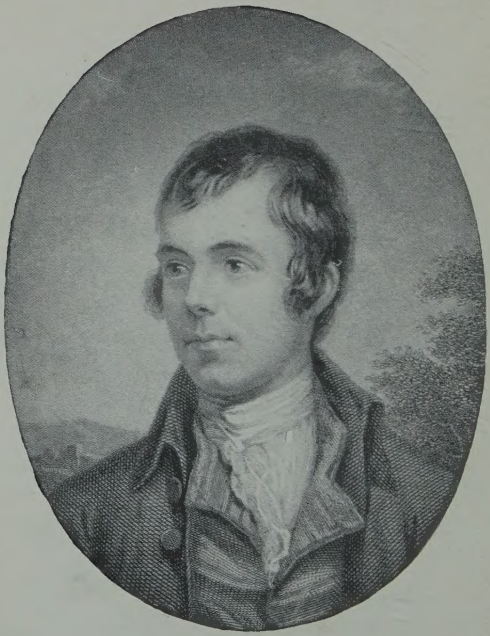

ROBERT BURNS.

CARLYLE'S ESSAY ON BURNS

WITH

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS FROM BURNS

Edited with Notes and an Introduction

BY

WILLARD C. GORE

Professor of English Literature in the Armour Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois

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INTRODUCTION

THOMAS CARLYLE AND ROBERT BURNS

"We have often wondered how he ever found out Burns," remarked Thoreau in commenting on the fact that Carlyle was not a critic of poetry, but that his sympathy was rather with men of endeavor, "and must still refer a good share of his delight in him to neighborhood and early association."[1]

There were common elements in their lives which helped to make Carlyle a sympathetic critic of Burns. Not only did both belong to the great clan of Scotchmen, but both came from the same part of Scotland, the same "neighborhood"—the Lowlands; Burns, from Ayrshire on the Firth of Clyde; Carlyle, from Dumfriesshire, bounded on the south and east by Solway Firth and the English border. Burns was born (January 25, 1759) in a clay-built cottage, reared by his father's own hands, on a farm about two miles

[1] Thoreau, "Thomas Carlyle and His Works," *A Yankee in Canada*, p. 234.

from the town of Ayr. Carlyle was born (December 4, 1795, one year before the death of Burns) in a house also built by his father, who was a carpenter and stonemason by trade, in the small market town of Ecclefechan, Annandale, consisting at that time of but a single street. Both came of sturdy Scotch peasant stock; and both owed much to the rugged simplicity and unaffected piety — in the Roman sense of the word — of their early home influences. *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, which is counted amongst the finest expressions of Burns's poetic genius, and *James Carlyle* in Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, which is different in form and substance, yet as unapproachable in its way, are in a sense tributes — high and lasting tributes, or, if you like the word, monuments — to these early home influences. Burns's and Carlyle's fathers were alike in many respects, though Carlyle's was far the sterner. What Carlyle says of Burns's father on pages 58 and 59 of this *Essay on Burns* could be applied almost word for word to his own father. In addition to the high and rare qualities of character dwelt upon in this passage, both possessed a native gift of speech; in the case of Carlyle's father especially, of speech bold, free, and pithy. Said Mr. John Murdock, the teacher of Burns, in describing his father: "He spoke the English language with more propriety (both with respect to diction and pro-

nunciation) than any man I ever knew with no greater advantages. This had a very good effect on the boys, who began to talk and reason like men much sooner than their neighbors."[1]

The following passage from Carlyle's tribute to his father is often quoted: —

"In several respects, I consider my Father as one of the most interesting men I have known. He was a man of perhaps the very largest natural endowment of any it has been my lot to converse with: none of us will ever forget that bold glowing style of his, flowing free from the untutored soul; full of metaphors (though he knew not what a metaphor was), with all manner of potent words (which he appropriated and applied with *surprising* accuracy, you often could not guess whence); brief, energetic; and which I should say conveyed the most perfect picture, definite, clear not in ambitious *colors* but in full *white* sunlight, of all the dialects I have ever listened to. Nothing did I ever hear him undertake to render visible, which did not become almost ocularly so. Never shall we again hear such speech as that was: the whole district knew of it; and laughed joyfully over it, not knowing how otherwise to express the

[1] Currie, *The Works of Robert Burns*, fifth edition, Vol. I., p. 95.

feeling it gave them. Emphatic I have heard him beyond all men. In anger he had no need of oaths: his words were like sharp arrows that smote into the very heart. The fault was that he exaggerated (which tendency I also inherit); yet only in description and for the sake chiefly of *humorous* effect: he was a man of rigid, even scrupulous veracity; I have often heard him turn back, when he thought his strong words were misleading, and correct them into measurative accuracy."[1]

As to their outward educational opportunities, however, Burns and Carlyle had little in common. The school days of the former were practically over when he was ten years of age, whereas at the same age the latter was beginning his preparation for a university course.

Robert Burns apparently made the most of the few opportunities for education that were thrown in his way. In the spring of 1765 his father and four of the neighbors clubbed together and engaged a young man by the name of John Murdock to take charge of a little school, which happened to be situated only a few yards from the "mud edifice" of the Burns family. "My pupil, Robert Burns, was then between six and seven years of age; his precep-

[1] Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, edited by Norton, i., p. 5.

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tor about eighteen," wrote Mr. Murdock some years later. "Robert, and his younger brother Gilbert, had been grounded a little in English before they were put under my care. They both made rapid progress in reading, and a tolerable progress in writing. In reading, dividing words into syllables by rule, spelling without book, parsing sentences, etc., Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were, the *Spelling Book*, the *New Testament*, the *Bible*, *Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse*, and *Fisher's English Grammar*. They committed to memory the hymns, and other poems of that collection, with uncommon facility. This facility was partly owing to the method pursued by their father and me in instructing them, which was, to make them thoroughly acquainted with the meaning of every word in each sentence that was to be committed to memory. By the bye, this may be easier done, and at an earlier period, than is generally thought."[1] Burns's way of putting the same fact is characteristic, "Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic

[1] Letter to Mr. Walker of Dublin, dated London, Feb. 22, 1799, Currie (*op. cit.*), pp. 86–96.

in substantives, verbs, and particles."[1] In 1766 his father moved to another farm, Mount Oliphant, which was so far from the school that the boys could no longer attend regularly; and on the departure of their teacher and friend some months later from that part of the country their attendance ceased altogether. "There being no school near us," wrote his brother Gilbert, "and our little services being useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings, by candle-light; and in this way my two eldest sisters got all the education they received."[2] At the age of thirteen he was sent with his brother Gilbert, "week about" during the summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple, to improve his writing. His brother concludes the narrative of his schooling thus: "The summer after we had been at Dalrymple school, my father sent Robert to Ayr, to revise his English grammar, with his former teacher [Murdock]. He had been there only one week, when he was obliged to return, to assist at the harvest. When the harvest was over, he went back to school, where he remained two weeks; and this completes the account of his school education, excepting one summer quarter, some time afterwards [in his nine-

[1] Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, Currie (*op. cit.*). p. 37.

[2] Currie (*op. cit.*), p. 61.

teenth year], that he attended the parish school of Kirk-Oswald . . . to learn surveying."[1] During the last two weeks that he was with Murdock he made so good a start in French, that with the aid of a French dictionary and grammar, and the *Aventures de Télémaque* by Fénelon he acquired "in a little while," so writes his brother, "such a knowledge of the language, as to read and understand any French author in prose."

Notwithstanding the good use to which outward opportunities for education had been put whenever they presented themselves, so few and limited had they been, although supplemented by considerable reading, that Burns had to work out single-handed, for the most part, the intellectual tools with which to direct his life and shape his art. His poverty was not without its rich compensations, but it remorselessly denied him access to the great intellectual storehouses of human experience at a time when his genius might have entered and claimed its own.[2] Not so in the case of Carlyle.

Carlyle, if not precocious, at least gave evidence when a child that there was something unusual in him. Before entering the village school he had learned

[1] Currie (*op. cit.*), p. 66.

[2] Cf. pp. 8, 9, and 59 of the *Essay on Burns.*

tc read from his mother, and under the hand of his father had taken his first steps in arithmetic "I remember, perhaps in my fifth year, his teaching me Arithmetical things: especially how to *divide* (of my letters taught me by my mother, I have no recollection whatever: of reading scarcely any): he said, 'This is the *divider* (divisor) this' etc., and gave me a quite clear notion how to do. My mother said I would forget it all; to which he answered: Not so much as they that never learned it. — Five years or so after, he said to me once: 'Tom, I do not grudge thy schooling, now when thy Uncle Frank owns thee to be a better Arithmetician than himself.'"[1] At the age of seven he was reported by the village schoolmaster as "complete in English," and soon began the study of Latin under the pastor and his son. In 1806 he was sent to the academy or "Grammar School" at Annan, a small town on Solway Firth about five miles south of Ecclefechan, to prepare for the University with a final outlook toward the ministry. Here, in spite of mechanical teaching and barbarian associates,[2] he learned to read

[1] *Reminiscences*, i., p. 45.

[2] For points of interest in regard to his life at the Annan Academy see Froude, *Thomas Carlyle, A History of the First Forty Years of his Life*, Vol. I., chap. ii.; *Reminiscences*, i., p. 46; and *Sartor Resartus*, Book II., chapter on "Pedagogy."

Latin and French fluently, and made considerable progress in algebra and geometry; so that he was prepared to enter the University of Edinburgh at the age of thirteen — in the fall of 1809.

His career at the University was not distinguished by brilliant scholarship. The only subject, as taught at the University, which aroused his enthusiasm was mathematics, in which he made marked progress, though winning no prizes; and, conversely, the professor of mathematics seems to have been the only member of the faculty who discerned in him any gift above the average. His acquaintances among the students were few; but as for these few intimate acquaintances, "intellectually and morally, he had impressed them as absolutely *unique* among them all, — such a combination of strength of character, rugged independence of manner, prudence, great literary powers, high aspirations and ambition, habitual despondency, and a variety of other humors, ranging from the ferociously sarcastic to the wildly tender, that it was impossible to set limits to what he was likely to become in the world."[1] Perhaps the chief benefit derived from the University was the wide course of reading which he pursued independently

[1] Masson, "Carlyle's Edinburgh Life" in *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*, p. 243.

throughout the four years of residence there.[1] "What the Universities can mainly do for you, — what I have found the University did for me," said Carlyle many years afterward (1866) in his inaugural address to the students of the same University, "is, That it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences; so that I could go into books which treated of these things, and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me." A passage from the chapter on "Pedagogy" in *Sartor Resartus* is at least mythically autobiographical on this point: "Nay from the chaos of that Library, I succeeded in fishing-up more books perhaps than had been known to the very keepers thereof. The foundation of a Literary Life was hereby laid. I learned, on my own strength, to read fluently in almost all cultivated languages, on almost all subjects and sciences; farther, as man is ever the prime object to man, already it was my favorite employment to read character in speculation, and from the Writing to construe the Writer. A certain ground-plan of Human Nature and Life began to fashion itself in me; wondrous enough, now when I look back on

[1] For lists of the books drawn by Carlyle from the University library during the first two years of residence, see Masson (*op. cit.*), p. 231.

it; for my whole Universe, physical and spiritual, was as yet a Machine! However, such a conscious, recognised groundplan, the truest I had, *was* beginning to be there, and by additional experiments might be corrected and indefinitely extended."

Carlyle's practical career, if it may be so called, began with schoolmastering. Soon after the completion of his college course, he was appointed mathematical tutor in the Annan Academy, the school in which he had formerly been a pupil. Two years later he gave up the position to accept the mastership of a school at Kirkcaldy, a town in northeastern Scotland by the Fife sea-shore. Meanwhile he had kept up a half-hearted connection with the Divinity School at the University, out of regard for the long cherished hopes of his parents. As time went on, however, he grew farther and farther away alike from the idea of entering the ministry and from the vocation of teaching. "Finding I had objections [to entering the ministry], my father, with a magnanimity which I admired and admire, left me frankly to my own guidance in the matter, as did my mother, perhaps still more lovingly, though not so silently." And so the connection with the Divinity School and all the connection implied was severed. Schoolmastering, also, after four years of it, became intolerable. In the fall of 1818 he resigned his position at Kirk-

caldy and went to Edinburgh with very indefinite prospects.

These years at Edinburgh were years of miserable, groping uncertainty, of bitter inward struggles. It was a period "on which he said that he never looked back without a kind of horror." He began the study of law, which "seemed glorious to him for its independency;" but presently gave it up in disgust as "a shapeless mass of absurdity and chicane." Dyspepsia had begun to torment him — "a rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach." He managed to eke out his savings by giving private lessons in mathematics; it was not that he had to face actual poverty or outward hardships, but that he had not yet found the work that he could do with his whole strength. "Hope hardly dwelt in me . . .; only fierce resolution in abundance to do my best and utmost in all honest ways and suffer as silently and stoically as might be, if it proved (as too likely!) that I could do *nothing*. This kind of humor, what I sometimes called of 'desperate hope,' has largely attended me all my life."

It would be difficult to over-emphasize the significance, not only for his own intellectual life, but also, as it proved, for the intellectual life of England and America, that at this crisis he began the study of the German language and literature. The years 1819–

1821 were chiefly devoted to mastering the language and reading deep and far into the literature. In 1820 he could write to one friend, "I could tell you much about the new Heaven and new Earth which a slight study of German literature has revealed to me." A few months later he wrote to another friend, "I have lived riotously with Schiller, Goethe, and the rest: they are the greatest men at present with me." [1] Carlyle had found a task into which he could put, for a time at least, his whole strength, — the introduction and interpretation to English thought and practice of the unifying and fructifying ideas of "Schiller, Goethe, and the rest." No man was more fit to do this than he of whom Goethe himself subsequently said, "He knows our literature better than we do ourselves." And no man than he felt more keenly the dualism into which much of contemporary English thought and literature had fallen, — the dualism of materialism *versus* sentiment; of things *versus* heart, — upon which the unifying and fructifying ideas of "Schiller, Goethe, and the rest," might exert an idealistic influence and do what Burns failed to do — "change the whole course of British literature." [2]

Carlyle's new interest soon found expression. In

[1] Masson (*op. cit.*), p. 283.
[2] Cf. the *Essay on Burns*, p. 59.

their home for the next six years, broken only by a seven months' visit to London (August, 1831–March, 1832) and a winter in Edinburgh (1833). Here some of Carlyle's best work was to be done. Of Craigenputtock itself and of Carlyle's reason for going there the reader may best judge from the following extract from a letter to Goethe:—

Craigenputtock, Dumfries,
25th September, 1828.

* * * * * * *

You inquire with such affection touching our present abode and employments, that I must say some words on that subject, while I have still space. Dumfries is a pretty town, of some 15,000 inhabitants; the Commercial and Judicial Metropolis of a considerable district on the Scottish border. Our dwelling place is not in it, but fifteen miles (two hours' riding) to the northwest of it, among the Granite Mountains and black moors which stretch westward through Galloway almost to the Irish Sea. This is, as it were, a green oasis in that desert of heath and rock; a piece of ploughed and partially sheltered and ornamented ground, where corn ripens and trees yield umbrage, though encircled on all hands by moorfowl and only the hardiest breeds of sheep. Here, by dint of great endeavor we have pargetted and garnished for our-

selves a clean substantial dwelling; and settled down in defect of any Professional or other Official appointment, to cultivate Literature, on our own resources, by way of occupation, and roses and garden shrubs, and if possible health and a peaceable temper of mind to forward it. The roses are indeed still mostly to plant; but they already blossom in Hope; and we have two swift horses, which, with the mountain air, are better than all physicians for sick nerves. That exercise, which I am very fond of, is almost my sole amusement; for this is one of the most solitary spots in Britain, being six miles from *any* individual of the formally visiting class. It might have suited Rousseau almost as well as his island of St. Pierre; indeed I find that most of my city friends impute to me a motive similar to his in coming hither, and predict no good from it. But I came hither purely for this one reason; that I might not have to write for bread, might not be tempted to tell lies for money. This space of Earth is our own, and we can live in it and write and think as seems best to us, though Zoilus[1] himself should become king of letters. And as to its solitude, a mail-coach will any day transport us to Edinburgh, which is our British Weimar. Nay, even

[1] A Greek rhetorician of the fourth century, noted for his adverse criticisms of Homer. — Ed.

at this time, I have a whole horse-load of French, German, American, English Reviews and Journals, were they of any worth, encumbering the tables of my little library. Moreover, from any of our heights I can discern a Hill, a day's journey to the eastward, where Agricola with his Romans has left a camp; at the foot of which I was born, where my Father and Mother are still living to love me. Time, therefore, must be left to try: but if I sink into folly, myself and not my situation will be to blame. Nevertheless I have many doubts about my future literary activity; on all which, how gladly would I take *your* counsel! Surely, you will write to me again, and ere long; that I may still feel myself united to you. Our best prayers for all good to you and yours are ever with you! Farewell!

"T. CARLYLE."[1]

A few days before writing this letter — September 16 — Carlyle, according to a note in his journal, had "finished a paper on Burns." The same letter contains the following paragraph, which, together with the passage quoted above, came to have the distinction, some two years later, of being quoted and commented upon by Goethe in his "Dedication and

[1] *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle*, edited by Norton, pp. 124–126. Cf. interesting letter to De Quincey dated December 11, 1828, in *Life of Carlyle* by H. J. Nicholl.

Introduction to the Translation of Carlyle's *Life of Schiller.*"[1] "The only thing of any moment I have written since I came hither is an *Essay on Burns*, for the next number of the *Edinburgh Review*, which, I suppose, will be published in a few weeks. Perhaps you have never heard of this *Burns*, and yet he was a man of the most decisive genius; but born in the rank of a peasant, and miserably wasted away by the complexities of his strange situation; so that all he effected was comparatively a trifle, and he died before middle age. We English, especially we Scotch, love Burns more than any other Poet we have had for centuries. It has often struck me to remark that he was born a few months only before Schiller, in the year 1759, and that neither of these two men, of whom I reckon Burns perhaps naturally even the greater, ever heard the other's name; but that they shone as stars in opposite hemispheres, the little Atmosphere of the Earth intercepting their mutual light."

Goethe's reply to Carlyle's letter contains these wise and appreciative words: —

[1] Appendix I. to the *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle.* In the "Dedication," etc. Goethe quotes also from the *Essay on Burns* a passage beginning, "Burns was born in an age," etc. (p. 9) to "a hundred years may pass on, before another is given us to waste" (p. 14), with the exception of a few sentences.

"With your countryman Burns, who, if he were still living would be your neighbor, I am sufficiently acquainted to prize him. The mention of him in your letter leads me to take up his poems again, and especially to read once more the story of his life, which truly, like the history of many a fair genius, is extremely sad.

"The poetic gift is, indeed, seldom united with the gift of managing life, and making good any adequate position.

"In his poems I have recognized a free spirit, capable of grasping the moment with vigor, and winning gladness from it."

We are beginning to understand, at last, how not only "neighborhood and early association" but the very inequalities of their opportunities served to bring Carlyle and Burns closer together. There are few finer examples of the supremacy of character through and over culture than that afforded by Carlyle, when, after his university training, such as it was, after his prodigious reading in history, poetry, and philosophy, unrivalled by that of any Englishman of his time, and covering the whole range of modern literature, — French, German, and English, — after having earned from Goethe, the greatest living authority in literature, the high commendation of being one who "rested on an original foundation" and who

"had the power to develop in himself the essentials of what is good and beautiful," he met Robert Burns, — literally on his own ground, — and looked into his face with the level, searching, yet sympathetic glance of a reader of men.

THE WRITINGS OF CARLYLE

Since the *Essay on Burns* not only lights the way to a deeper appreciation and enjoyment of the poems of Burns, but also may serve as a natural introduction to the subsequent writings of Carlyle, it remains to speak briefly of the latter. The outward events of Carlyle's life from now on were comparatively few and unimportant. In the spring of 1834 he left Craigenputtock for London, where he settled at No. 5 Cheyne (pronounced *Chainey*) Row in the suburb of Chelsea, two miles west of the city on the north bank of the Thames. This was to be his home for nearly half a century, or until the day of his death, February 5, 1881; here he resided continuously with the exception of annual visits to his old home in Scotland, and a few short trips to Ireland, France, and Germany. In the work done here during the next thirty years is to be found his truest biography, the sincere reflection

In 1839 Carlyle's most important articles were collected and republished in four volumes, entitled *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays.* Among these was the *Essay on Burns.* The revisions made by Carlyle in preparing the *Essay* for republication are of exceptional interest. They afford glimpses into his literary workshop, and permit us to see how he handled his tools, — not those, to be sure, which are used in blocking out and executing the main body of the work, but those of finer edge and temper which serve to bring out the more subtle shades of meaning or to point a keener emphasis. A list of some of the revised passages, printed side by side with the original versions, is given below. After the student has read the *Essay,* and has seen into its larger organic structure, and has learned to keep step with the swing and onward movement of the style, it will pay him to turn his attention back to some of these finer points of workmanship. Just why was this particular change made by Carlyle? In just what way was this sentence improved as to its clearness, strength, coherence, or eternal fitness? In order to answer such questions as these, it will be found necessary in nearly

pp. 38–39, "But has it not been said, . . . Baited with many a deadly curse!"; and p. 45, "Apart from the universal sympathy with man . . . not without significance."

every case to consider the passage with reference to its context, — sometimes with reference to the whole paragraph or section, — and thus, even in small things, the organic character of the style will be made manifest.

ORIGINAL AND REVISED VERSIONS

ORIGINAL VERSIONS IN THE EDINBURGH REVIEW	REVISED VERSIONS
Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust that they may meet with acceptance from those *for* whom they are intended (p. 270).	Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust that they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended *for* (p. 7).
Conquerors are a *race* with whom the world could well dispense (p. 272).	Conquerors are a *class of men* with whom, *for the most part*, the world could well dispense (p. 11)
It is necessary, however, to mention, that it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude, etc. (p. 276).	*Here, however, let us say,* it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude, etc. (p. 20).

it is in some past, distant, conventional world, that poetry resides *for him*, etc. (p. 277).

it is in some past, distant, conventional *heroic* world, that poetry resides, etc. (p. 22).

The poet, *we cannot but think*, can never have far to seek for a subject, etc. (p. 277).

The poet, *we imagine*, can never have far to seek for a subject, etc. (p. 23).

Without *eyes*, indeed, the task might be hard (p. 278).

Without *eyesight*, indeed, the task might be hard. *The blind or the purblind man* '*travels from Dan to Beer-sheba, and finds it all barren*' (p. 25).

We see *in him* the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero (p. 279).

We see *that in this man there was* the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero (p. 27).

And observe with what a *prompt and eager* force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! (p. 279.)

And observe with what a *fierce prompt* force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! (p. 28.)

Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in *extreme* sensibility, and a certain vague *pervading* tunefulness of na-

Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in *a weak-eyed maudlin* sensibility, and a certain vague *random* tunefulness

ture, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion (p. 281).

What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging; it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw philosophy; never rose, except for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication remains for us in his works, etc. (p. 282).

Under a lighter *and thinner* disguise, etc. (p. 284)

and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken p h a n t a s m a g o r i a, painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality (p. 285).

The Song has its rules equally with Tragedy (p. 286).

of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion (p. 33).

What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except *by natural effort and* for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, *if no proof sufficient*, remains for us in his works, etc. (p. 33).

Under a lighter disguise, etc. (p. 41).

and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, *or many colored spectrum* painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality (p. 43).

Yet the Song has its rules equally with Tragedy, etc. (p. 46).

In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in *the* joy and woe of existence, etc. (p. 287).

In his *most* toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him, etc. (p. 289).

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long, *we cannot but think that the Life he willed, and was fated to lead among his fellow men, is both more interesting and instructive than any of his written works* (p. 290).

Thus, like a young man, he cannot *steady* himself for any *fixed or systematic pursuit*, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope, and remorseful disappointment, etc. (p. 291).

Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins, *at all events*, even when we have

In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in *many colored* joy and woe of existence, etc. (p. 49).

In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him, etc. (p. 53).

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. *Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men* (p. 54).

Thus, like a young man, he cannot *gird* himself *up* for any *worthy well-calculated goal*, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment, etc. (p. 56).

Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to

surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do, etc. (p. 293).

Some of his admirers, *indeed, are* scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him *apparently* lie *still* at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage *should stir* the waters, *and then heal with one plunge all his worldly sorrows! We fear that such counsellors knew but little of Burns; and did not consider that happiness might in all cases be cheaply had by waiting for the fulfilment of golden dreams*, were it not that in the interim *the dreamer* must die of hunger (p. 298).

And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such *guide* there was no right steering (p. 300).

The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually dif-

Necessity, as the most part only do, etc. (p. 61).

Certain of his admirers *have felt* scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage *stirred* the waters, *that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness*, were it not that in the interim *he* must die of hunger! (p. 73.)

And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such *loadstar* there was no right steering (p. 77).

The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually dif-

ficult for him to *repel* or *resist;* the better spirit that was in him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy : he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two ; and lost it, as he must *have lost* it, without reconciling them *here* (p. 306).

Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged ; *and* the pilot is therefore blameworthy ; *for* he has not been all-wise and all-powerful ; but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs (p. 311).

ficult for him to *cast aside*, or *rightly subordinate ;* the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two ; and lost it, as he must *lose* it, without reconciling them (p. 90).

Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged ; the pilot is blameworthy ; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful : but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs (p. 101).

APPRECIATIONS

It is admirable in Carlyle that, in his judgment of our German authors, he has especially in view the mental and moral core as that which is really influential. Carlyle is a moral force of great importance. There is in him much for the future, and we cannot

foresee what he will produce and effect. — GOETHE: *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Scott.* (July 25, 1827, — a year before the *Essay on Burns* was written.) Translated by John Oxenford. London, 1874. p. 276.

There is no philosophy here for philosophers, only as every man is said to have his philosophy. No system but such as is the man himself; and, indeed, he stands compactly enough; no progress beyond the first assertion and challenge, as it were, with trumpet blast. One thing is certain, — that we had best be doing something in good earnest henceforth forever; that's an indispensable philosophy. The before impossible precept, '*know thyself*,' he translates into the partially possible one, '*know what thou canst work at.*' — THOREAU: *Thomas Carlyle and His Works. A Yankee in Canada.* p. 240. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

I did not, however, deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could only when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove, but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out. I knew that I could not see round him, and could never be certain that I saw over him; and I never presumed

to judge him with any definiteness, until he was interpreted to me by one greatly the superior of us both — who was more of a poet than he, and more of a thinker than I — whose own mind and nature included his, and infinitely more. — JOHN STUART MILL: *Autobiography.*

He did not believe in democracy, in popular sovereignty, in the progress of the species, in the political equality of Jesus and Judas: in fact, he repudiated with mingled wrath and sorrow the whole American idea and theory of politics; yet who shall say that his central doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the nobility of labor, the exaltation of justice, valor, pity, the leadership of character, truth, nobility, wisdom, etc., is really and finally inconsistent with, or inimical to, that which is valuable and permanent and formative in the modern movement? I think it is the best medicine and regimen for it that could be suggested — the best stay and counterweight. For the making of good Democrats, there are no books like Carlyle's, and we in America need especially to cherish him, and to lay his lesson to heart. — JOHN BURROUGHS: *Fresh Fields*, p. 281. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

One of Mr. Carlyle's chief and just glories is, that for more than forty years he has clearly seen, and kept constantly and conspicuously in his own sight and that of his readers, the profoundly important crisis in the midst of which we are living. The moral and social

dissolution in progress about us, and the enormous peril of sailing blindfold and haphazard, without rudder or compass or chart, have always been fully visible to him, and it is no fault of his if they have not become equally plain to his contemporaries. The policy of drifting has had no countenance from him. — MORLEY: *Carlyle.* In *Critical Miscellanies,* London, 1871. (Chapman and Hall.)

It is not the intellect alone, or the imagination alone, which can become sensible of the highest virtue in the writings of Mr. Carlyle. He is before all else a power with reference to conduct. He too cannot live without a divine presence. He finds it in the entire material universe, "the living garment of God." Teufelsdröckh among the Alps is first awakened from his stony sleep at the "Centre of Indifference" by the glory of the white mountains, the azure dome, the azure winds, the black tempest marching in anger through the distance. He finds the divine presence in the spirit of man, and in the heroic leaders of our race. — DOWDEN: *Studies in Literature,* p. 74. London, 1878. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.)

In Switzerland I live in the immediate presence of a mountain, noble alike in form and mass. A bucket or two of water, whipped into a cloud, can obscure, if not efface, that lordly peak. You would almost say that no peak could be there. But the cloud passes

away, and the mountain, in its solid grandeur, remains. Thus, when all temporary dust is laid, will stand out, erect and clear, the massive figure of Carlyle. — TYNDALL: *On Unveiling of the Statue to Thomas Carlyle. New Fragments of Science*, p. 397. (D. Appleton & Co.)

Though not the safest of guides in politics or practical philosophy, his value as an inspirer and awakener cannot be over-estimated. It is a power which belongs only to the highest order of minds, for it is none but a divine fire that can so kindle and irradiate. The debt due him from those who listened to the teachings of his prime for revealing to them what sublime reserves of power even the humblest may find in manliness, sincerity, and self-reliance, can be paid with nothing short of reverential gratitude. As a purifier of the sources whence our intellectual inspiration is drawn, his influence has been second only to that of Wordsworth, if even to his. Indeed he has been in no fanciful sense the continuator of Wordsworth's moral teaching. — LOWELL: *Carlyle. Literary Essays*, Vol. II., p. 118. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

Carlyle, therefore, must be judged as a poet, and not as a dealer in philosophic systems; as a seer or a prophet, not as a theorist or a man of calculations. And, therefore, if I were attempting any criticism of his literary merits, I should dwell upon his surpassing

power in his peculiar province. Admitting that every line he wrote has the stamp of his idiosyncrasies, and consequently requires a certain congeniality of temperament in the reader, I should try to describe the strange spell which it exercises over the initiated. If you really hate the grotesque, the gloomy, the exaggerated, you are of course disqualified from enjoying Carlyle. You must take leave of what ordinarily passes even for common-sense, of all academical canons of taste, and of any weak regard for symmetry or simplicity before you enter the charmed circle. But if you can get rid of your prejudices for the nonce, you will certainly be rewarded by seeing visions such as are evoked by no other magician. The common-sense reappears in the new shape of strange vivid flashes of humor and insight casting undisputed gleams of light into many dark places; and dashing off graphic portraits with a single touch. And if you miss the serene atmosphere of calmer forms of art, it is something to feel at times, as no one but Carlyle can make you feel, that each instant is the "conflux of two eternities"; that our little lives, in his favorite Shakespearian phrase, are "rounded with a sleep"; that history is like the short space lighted up by a flickering taper in the midst of infinite glooms and mysteries, and its greatest events brief scenes in a vast drama of conflicting forces, where the actors are

passing in rapid succession — rising from and vanishing into the all-embracing darkness. — LESLIE STEPHEN: *Carlyle's Ethics. Hours in a Library.*

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BURNS

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In the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like 'Butler,° 'ask for bread and receive a stone'; for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny° is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument° has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he lan-

guished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life*° that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart° thinks it necessary to apologize for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay, perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's,° and neighbor of John a Combe's,° had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a Life of

Shakespeare! What dissertations should we not have had, — not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honorable Excise Commissioners,° and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt,° and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers,° and the New and Old Light Clergy,° whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie° and Mr. Walker,° the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: Their own and the world's true relation

to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honor to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay, it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pro-

nounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for *Constable's Miscellany*,° it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multifarious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck° observes of the society in the backwoods of America, 'the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment.' But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a

first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents, — though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession, — as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavors and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of per

fection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with good-will, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the 'nine days' have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamor proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may

now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest: the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down

with a pickaxe: and he must be a Titan° that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay, of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson° or Ramsay° for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labor, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindliest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no

mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale Shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapors, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe,° and perish on his

rock 'amid the melancholy main,'° presented to the reflecting mind such a 'spectacle of pity and fear' as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the 'Eternal Melodies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable,

but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny, — for so in our ignorance we must speak, — his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The 'Daisy'° falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that 'wee, cowering, timorous beastie,'° cast forth, after all its provident pains, to 'thole° the sleety dribble° and cranreuch° cauld.' The 'hoar visage' of Winter° delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, 'it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*' A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, bound

less love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion,° but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the 'insolence

of condescension' cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay, throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was 'quick to learn'; a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; 'a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody.' And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay, even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humor of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who

read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and labored amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to

be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; 'in homely rustic jingle'; but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere,*° is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head

too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we would ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author,

which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humor, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last three-score and ten years. To our minds, there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay, he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who

comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavor to fulfil it. Certain of his Letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain highflown inflated tone; the stilting emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative

deficiency in language. Burns, though for the most part he writes with singular force, and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either forearming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop° are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he

has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical, but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-colored Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun,° and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-colored Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, 'a sermon on the duty of staying at home.' Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one

day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men, — they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so, — they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favor, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavors; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the

mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*,° a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had, by his own strength, kept the whole Minerva Press° going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet.

Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance 'the elder dramatists,' and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man 'travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren.' But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel° and Tarbolton.°

if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's,° or the Tuileries° itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago;° inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakespeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Hallowe'en* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laugh-

ter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus,° till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent*° or Roman *Jubilee*°; but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feel-

ing; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his 'lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit.' And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason, some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch° is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could

produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours);

When biting Boreas,° fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phœbus° *gies a short-liv'd glowr*°
Far south the lift,°
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
Poor labor sweet in sleep was lock'd,
While burns° *wi' snawy wreeths*° *upchok'd*
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd°
Down headlong hurl.

Are there not 'descriptive touches' here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. 'Poor labor locked in sweet sleep'; the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye! — Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig:*

When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's *mossy* fountains *boil*,
Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
Or haunted Garpal[1] draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds and *spotting* thowes,°
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo° rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,°
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Ratton-key,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, *tumbling* sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
And *dash the gumlie jaups° up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture° of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the 'gumlie jaups' and the 'pouring skies' are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin. — In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops,° or yoking of Priam's Chariot.° Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind*° and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink:* but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer

[1] *Fabulosus Hydaspes!*°

sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

> *The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,*
> *And time is setting wi' me, O;*
> Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
> I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe° and Richardson° have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions

Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of 'a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from the Almighty God.' Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward, he says, '*red-wat-shod*'°: giving in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart° says of him, with some surprise: 'All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.' But this, if we mistake not, is at all times

the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats,° where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts, that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakespeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indicted a *Novum Organum*.° What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength;

and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay, perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and 'the highest,' it has been said, 'cannot be expressed in words.' We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, 'wonders,' in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the 'doctrine of association.'° We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

'We know nothing,'° thus writes he, 'or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or

struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.'

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes,

they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that 'Love furthers knowledge': but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: 'the hoary hawthorn,' the 'troop of gray plover,' the 'solitary curlew,' all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit

as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the 'ourie cattle' and 'silly sheep,' and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

I thought me on the ourie° cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle°
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,°
Beneath a scar.°

Ilk° happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering° wing,
An close thy ee?

The tenant of the mean hut, with its 'ragged roof and chinky wall,' has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak' a thought and men'!

Ye aiblins° might, — I dinna ken, –
Still hae a stake ;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake !

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop°; "and is cursed and damned already." — "I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby ! — a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that 'Indignation makes verses'°? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite

of Johnson's° paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay, that a 'good' hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his '*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark*'; a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus°? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless, baleful 'darkness visible'; and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

> Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
> Hangman of Creation, mark!
> Who in widow's weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonored years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse
> Baited with many a deadly curse!

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;* since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed

on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forbore to speak, — judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell*. Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that coöperates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus,° that 'lived a life of sturt° and strife, and died by treacherie,' — was not he too one of the Nimrods° and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his

better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain, and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes,° and in Pelops' line,° was material Fate matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humor. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humor: but a much tenderer sportfulness

dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humor as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar, — the Humor of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aërial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favor, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when

the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck° but the Musäus° of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay, the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum painted on ale-vapors, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more 'Shakespearean' qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have

been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay, we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his 'poems' is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*. The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin*,° that *wee Apollo*,° that *Son of Mars*,° are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of 'Poosie-Nansie.'° Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when

the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird*° and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their 'brats and callets'° are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humor, warm life, and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers,° for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*,° in the *Beggars' Bush*,° as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigor, equals this *Cantata ;* nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although

through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough 'by per sons of quality'; we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech 'in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius° the Portugal Bishop,' rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavoring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region fa enough short of the *Soul;* not in which, but in certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable-land on the outskirts of the Ne

vous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakespeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings,

yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or sliest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, 'sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear.' If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven;* from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Langsyne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart, — it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's° aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. 'Let me make the songs of a people,' said he, 'and you shall make its laws.' Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions

that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish, literature has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers° seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo;* the

thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalizations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith° is an exception: not so Johnson°; the scene of his *Rambler*° is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.°

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston° was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames° made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume,°

Robertson,° Smith,° and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our 'fervid genius,' there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine° and Voltaire,° Batteux° and Boileau,° that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu° and Mably° that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's° lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche,° was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived*, as metaphysically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay, of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic:

but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briers, but into roses, in the field of his life! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briers nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the 'Doctrine of Rent' to the 'Natural History of Religion,' are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among

us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humors and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: 'a tide of Scottish prejudice,' as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, 'had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest.' It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him, — that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he labored there! In his toilsome journeyings, this objects never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name

from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

> . . . A wish° (I mind its power),
> A wish, that to my latest hour
> Will strongly heave my breast, —
> That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
> Some useful plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least.
>
> The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
> Amang the bearded bear,°
> I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
> And spared the symbol dear.

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with

many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavors, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay, was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself°; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim,° even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of

will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain 'Rock of Independence'; which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colors: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honor, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labor, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro,

between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay, advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favor. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no 'pre-established harmony' existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have ap-

peared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw;

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the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anywise prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature, — for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us worship God*, are heard there from a 'priest-like father'[°]: if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a 'little band of brethren.' Neither are such tears, and the deep

beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay, to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humor of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-colored splendor and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

. . . . . in glory and in joy,°
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay, that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of phi-

losophers have asserted to be a natural preparation for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when

we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did, and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples

about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurers than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by 'passions raging like demons'[10] from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder: for now

not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; 'hungry Ruin has him in the wind.'° He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the 'gloomy night is gathering fast,'° in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

> Farewell, my friends; farewell, my foes!
> My peace with these, my love with those:
> The bursting tears my heart declare;
> Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honor, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For

it is nowise as a 'mockery king,' set there by favor, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi,° whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

'It needs no effort of imagination,' says he, 'to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots* of the most

celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble, — nay, to tremble visibly, — beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.'

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns

as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

'As for Burns,' writes Sir Walter, 'I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum.*° I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country; the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on

one side, — on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

> "Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew, —
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery, baptized in tears."

'Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of "The Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

'His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his counte

nance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturists who kept laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emolu-

ments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

'I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

'This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*,° when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. — I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since.'

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favor; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which

he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigor and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay, had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred

fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we 'long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price'; and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewha

richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay, poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge;* and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most

golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he 'did not intend to borrow honor from any profession.' We think, then, that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a-year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy

Generous also, and worthy of him, was his treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the 'patrons of genius,' who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,[1] all manner of fashionable dan-

[1] There is one little sketch by certain 'English gentlemen' of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: 'On a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling,

glers after literature, and, far worse, all manner o convivial Mæcenases,° hovered round him in hi retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualitie secured them influence over him. He was flattere by their notice; and his warm social nature made i impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on hi way apart from them. These men, as we believe were proximately the means of his ruin. Not tha they meant him any ill; they only meant themselve a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it But they wasted his precious time and his precio talent; they disturbed his composure, broke dow his returning habits of temperance and assiduou contented exertion. Their pampering was banefu

° of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox skin o his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, fro which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It wa Burns.' Now, we rather think, it was *not* Burns. For, to sa nothing of the fox skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernia watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this 'eno mous Highland broad-sword' depending from him? Mo especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the lool out to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to h own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had th least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, eith in his own eyes, or those of others, by such poor mummeries.

to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighborhood; and Burns had no retreat but to 'the Rock of Independence,' which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapors of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true loadstar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay, with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such loadstar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel:

and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance, — in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin,° and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay, his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Gra-

zierdom, had actually seen dishonor in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

'A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: "Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now"; and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsel dowie upon the corn-bing."

> "O, were we young as we ance hae been,
> We suld hae been galloping down on yon green,
> And linking° it ower the lily-white lea!
> *And werena my heart light, I wad die.*"

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived.'

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps 'where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,'[1] and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down, — who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude

[1] *Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* Swift's Epitaph.

hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! 'If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!' Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labor itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the 'thoughtless follies' that had 'laid him low,' the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served

zealously as a volunteer.° Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone; and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns

had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly, yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection, and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion which would have availed him, lies not

so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced 'Patronage,' that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be 'twice cursed';° cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honor; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which

we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage,° unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At

all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay, it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakespeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the 'nobility and gentry of his native land' hold out any help to this 'Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country'? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns;

many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumb-screws, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, 'Love one another, bear one another's burdens,' given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels° of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless*, is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon° and Galileo° languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso° pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens° dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so 'persecuted they the Prophets,' not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay, if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Versemonger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise; this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery, and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke° was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost?* Not only low, but fallen from a height: not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish

his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*,° which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of a paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the 'golden-calf of Self-love,' however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word,

they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces, and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais,° 'a great Perhaps.'

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could

he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, 'independent'; but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; 'to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him.' He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavors. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect, and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy,

with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a Poet poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. 'I would not for much,' says Jean Paul, 'that I had been born richer.' And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: 'The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter.' But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, 'the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage.'

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an

Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly 'respectability.' We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay, have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron,° a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honors, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the

Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have 'purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan'; for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay, he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now—we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the

camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history, — *twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton° are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: 'He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem.' If he can not first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and be-sing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him

If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favor of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favor and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of

Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay, from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita*° of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome; nay, the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which

one never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate° and the Isle of Dogs°.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain° will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

POEMS FROM BURNS

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the Poor.
— GRAY.

My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;

The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their 'dad,' wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labor an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom — love sparkling in her e'e —

Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The yunkers a' are warnèd to obey;
An' mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;
An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
"An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,

Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare, —
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,

'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The sowpe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps 'Dundee's' wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive 'Martyrs,' worthy of the name;
Or noble 'Elgin' beets the heaven-ward flame
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;

Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;

When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his Book of Life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God:"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,

Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, Oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN

A DIRGE

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man, whose agèd step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
Began the rev'rend sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labor to support
A haughty lordling's pride;

I've seen yon weary winter sun
Twice forty times return:
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
That man was made to mourn.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported in his right,
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

A few seem favorites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great

Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh! what crowds in ev'ry land
Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frames!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

See yonder poor, o'erlabor'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless off-spring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law design'd,

Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressèd, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

O death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my agèd limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasures torn;
But, Oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!

A PRAYER, IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH

O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun —
As something, loudly in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done —

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All Good! — for such Thou art —
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER

TUNE—"*The Weaver and his Shuttle, O*"

My Father was a Farmer upon the Carrick border, O
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O
My talents they were not the worst: nor yet my education, O
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favor; O
Some cause unseen still stept between, to frustrate each endeavor, O
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd; sometimes by friends forsaken; O
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last, with fortune's
vain delusion; O
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this
conclusion; O
The past was bad, and the future hid; its good or ill
untrièd; O
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would
enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I; nor person to be-
friend me; O
So I must toil, and sweat and broil, and labor to sus-
tain me, O
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred
me early; O
For one, he said, to labor bred, was a match for fortune
fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm
doom'd to wander, O
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slum-
ber; O
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me
pain or sorrow; O
I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-mor-
row, O.

But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a palace, O
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice; O
I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther; O
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labor I earn a little money, O
Some unforeseen misfortune comes gen'rally upon me; O
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natur'd folly; O
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power, with unremitting ardor, O
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther; O
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL I THE NEW YEAR

A GUID New-Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gone like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek an' glaizie,
A bonie gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;

An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride;
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,

That day ye was a jinker noble
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young and skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skriegh
An' tak the road!
Town's-bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gart them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March-weather
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd briskit,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and riskit,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labor back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae face't it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;

But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a':
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;

Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!

A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past,
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME, WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go, live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains;

No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last, sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,

Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
The mournin weed:
He's lost a friend and neibor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense;
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get c' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships,
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie's dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing — a rape!
It maks guid fellows grin an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye Bards on bonie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon!
His Mailie's dead!

A WINTER NIGHT

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you,
From seasons such as these?

—SHAKESPEARE

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labor sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreeths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,

And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing!
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole —

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!

Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now, united shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!

"See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

"Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honor's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,

Can harbor, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted honor turns away,
Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs
Perhaps this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers, piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low,
By cruel fortune's undeservèd blow?

Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

WINTER

A DIRGE

THE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae:
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May·
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (Oh! do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem.

To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,

Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

AFTON WATER

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;

There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear
wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

THE BANKS O' DOON

TUNE — "*The Caledonian Hunt's Delight*"

YE banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed — never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its Luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine;
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause Luver staw my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

DUNCAN GRAY

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost her head fu high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,

Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!
Ha, ha, &c.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg grew sick, as he grew well,
Ha, ha, &c.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

AULD LANG SYNE

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine,
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;

But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fier,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

HIGHLAND MARY

TUNE—"*Katherine Ogie*"

YE banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery!
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumly:
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,

As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary.

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN

TUNE—"*Miss Forbes' farewell to Banff*"

THOU lingering star, with less'ning ray,
  Thou lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
  My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
  Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
  Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
  Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
  To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
  Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
  Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,
  O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
  Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,

The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

ODE, SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. OSWALD

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation! mark,
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonor'd years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse?

STROPHE

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace

Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose.
See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took — but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
(A while forbear, ye tort'ring fiends,)
Seest thou whose step unwilling hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies;
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n!

The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

MY NANNIE'S AWA

TUNE — "*There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*"

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless — my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drop and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn:
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie — my Nannie's awa.

Thou laverock that springs frae the dews o' the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the gray-breaking dawn,
And thou, yellow mavis, that hails the night-fa',
Gie over for pity — my Nannie's awa.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' Nature's decay;
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me — now Nannie's awa.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

TUNE—"*The Lass of Livingstone*"

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Of earth and air, of earth and air,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The only jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

JOHN ANDERSON my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,

Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.

FAREWELL TO AYR

TUNE—"*Roslin Castle*"

THE gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,

The scattered coveys meet secure,
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound:
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!

Farewell, my friends! Farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare —
Farewell, the bonie banks of Ayr.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

My heart's in the Highland's, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valor, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands. wherever I go

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree.

CHORUS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows tree.

Oh, what is death but parting breath?
On monie a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!
Sae rantingly, &c.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword;
And there's no man in all Scotland,
But I'll brave him at a word.
Sae rantingly, &c.

I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart
And not avengèd be.
Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame disdain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!
Sae rantingly, &c.

BANNOCKBURN

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY

To its ain Tune

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power,
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa',
Let him on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do — or die!

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS

TUNE — "*Push about the jorum*"

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir.

The Nith shall run to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink to Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!
Fal de ral, &c.

O let us not like snarling tykes
In wrangling be divided;
Till, slap, come in an unco loon
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!
Fal de ral, &c.

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our fathers' bluid the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;
By heaven, the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!
Fal de ral, &c.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch his true-born brother,
Who would set the mob aboon the throne,
May they be damn'd together!
Who will not sing, "God save the King,"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing, "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget the People!

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, an' a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that;
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.

For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
His riband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;

That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

NOTES

Page 1, line 3. **Butler** (Samuel, 1612–1680). **Author of** *Hudibras* (1663–1678), a mock-heroic poem satirizing Puritanism and popular in the court of Charles II. "It was, however, the scandal of the age, that though the king was lavish in promises, he never did anything to relieve Butler's poverty. . . . He lived in poverty and obscurity for seventeen years after the first appearance of *Hudibras*. — EDMUND GOSSE, in Dictionary of National Biography.

"My first favorite books had been Hudibras and **Tristram** Shandy." — *Carlyle*. Froude, Vol. I., p. 396.

l. 7. **The inventor of a spinning-jenny.** Even he — James Hargreaves (17 –1778) — was driven from his home in Lancashire by a mob of spinners on the old-fashioned wheel, who feared they would be thrown out of employment by his invention.

l. 17. **more than one splendid monument**. For more information in regard to the monuments erected to the memory of Burns, see a well-illustrated article in the *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, p. 238.

Page 2, line 4. **the sixth narrative of his Life.** *The Life of Robert Burns*. By J. G. Lockhart, LL.B. Edinburgh, 1828. There were even more than five before. "The four principal biographers of our poet, Heron, Currie, Walker, and Irving,"

etc. — LOCKHART: *Life of Burns*, chap. viii. Cromek and Peterkin had also written narratives of the poet's life. See bibliography in Blackie's *Life of Burns* (Great Writers Series) and note to article on Burns in Dict. of Nat. Biog.

l. 6. **Lockhart** (John Gibson, 1794–1854) is best known as the biographer of Sir Walter Scott, whose son-in-law he was.

l. 23. **Sir Thomas Lucy**, according to a now discredited tradition, prosecuted Shakespeare for poaching in his deer park, which was near Charlecote Hall, three miles from Stratford.

l. 24. **John a Combe** was a well-to-do and (according to tradition) usurious citizen of Stratford, from whom Shakespeare purchased many acres of land, and for whom, at his laughing request, Shakespeare is said to have proposed the following epitaph: —

> "Ten-in-the-Hundred lies here ingrav'd;
> 'Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd.
> If any man asks, 'Who lies in this tomb?'
> 'Oh, ho!' quoth the Devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.'"

— Cf. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS' *Outlines of Shakespeare's Life*.

Page 3, line 9. **Honorable Excise Commissioners.** The excise is an inland duty levied on certain commodities of home produce, such as ale, spirits, tobacco, etc., or on their manufacture or sale. **Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt.** An association of Scotch noblemen and gentry. Burns dedicated to them the second edition of his poems (the first Edinburgh edition) The following excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the association, held at Edinburgh, January 10, 1787, may be of interest in this connection: "A motion being made by the Earl of Glen-

cavin, and seconded by Sir John Whitefoord, in favor of Mr. Burns of Ayrshire, who had dedicated the new Edition of his Poems to the Caledonian Hunt. The meeting were of the opinion, that, in consideration of his superior merit as well as of the compliment paid to them, Mr. Hagart should be directed to subscribe for one hundred copies, in their name, for which he should pay to Mr. Burns, twenty-five pounds, upon the publication of his book." — *Bibliography of Robert Burns.* (James Gibson, editor.)

l. 11. **Ayr Writers.** In Scotland the term "writer" is applied to law agents, attorneys, and sometimes to their principal clerks.

l. 12. **New and Old Light Clergy.** Two factions into which the church of Scotland was split. The former, under the leadership of Blair and Robertson, were radical and progressive, the latter adhered to strict Calvinistic views. Burns sided with the New Lights. Cf. p. 62 and p. 93.

l. 23. **Dr. Currie.** Dr. James Currie (1756–1805), a Scotch physician, published in 1800, in behalf of the family of the poet, an edition of the poems, introduced by a *Life of Burns.* **Mr. Walker.** A life of Burns, by Josiah Walker, was prefixed to an edition of the poems in 1811, and separately printed.

Page 5, line 10. **Constable's Miscellany.** It consisted of a series of original works, and of standard works republished in cheap form, and was the earliest attempt to popularize good literature. Lockhart's *Life of Burns* appeared in this form (dated 1828), — a duodecimo volume of 310 pages. The series was projected in 1825 by Archibald Constable (1774–1827), the famous Edinburgh publisher of Scott's novels.

l. 21. **Mr. Morris Birkbeck.** His book was entitled, *Notes*

on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois, London, 1818.

Page 9, line 1. **Titan.** The Titans were twelve children of *Uranus* and *Gœa* (Heaven and Earth), and typified the lawless, brute forces of nature. In their wars with Zeus they piled mountains upon mountains in attempting to scale heaven.

l. 11. **Fergus[s]on** (Robert, 1750–1774). One of his best poems was *The Farmer's Ingle*, from which Burns is said to have derived the idea of his *Cotter's Saturday Night*. **Ramsay** (Allan, 1686–1758). "In some respects the best pastoral writer in the world." — LEIGH HUNT. For an interesting discussion of Burns's style, cf. R. L. Stevenson: *Some Aspects of Robert Burns in Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. The following sentences are quoted from the same: "To Ramsay and to Fergusson, then, he was indebted in a very uncommon degree, not only following their tradition and using their measures, but directly and avowedly imitating their pieces. . . . When we remember Burns's obligations to his predecessors, we must never forget his immense advances on them. They had already 'discovered' nature; but Burns discovered poetry — a higher and more intense way of thinking of the things that go to make up nature, a higher and more ideal key of words in which to speak of them." Cf. also p. 70, line 6.

Page 10, line 25. **Sir Hudson Lowe** (1769–1844). A British general who was governor of St. Helena during Napoleon's captivity there (1815–1821).

Page 11, line 1. **amid the melancholy main.** Quoted from stanza XXX. of the *Castle of Indolence*, by James Thomson (1700–1748).

Page 12, line 12. **The Daisy.** Cf. *To a Mountain Daisy.*

l. 14. **wee, cowering,** etc. Cf. *To a Mouse.*

l. 15. **thole.** To endure. **dribble.** Drizzle. **cranreuch.** Hoar frost.

l. 16. **Winter.** Cf. *Winter: a Dirge.*

l. 20. **it raises his thoughts,** etc. Psalms civ. 3. Burns in a note to the poem, *Winter: a Dirge*, says: "It [winter] is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him* who, in the pompous language of Scripture, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortunes, I composed the following song." — *Commonplace Book*, April, 1784.

Page 13, line 6. **Arcadian illusion.** Arcadia was a district in the heart of the Peloponnesus, shut in on all sides by mountains, where dwelt a simple, pastoral people, fond of music and dancing; hence it has become a synonym for ideal rustic simplicity.

Page 17, line 6. "**Si vis me flere,** *dolendum est primum ipsi tibi; tum tua me infortunia laedent.*" — HORACE: *De Arte Poetica.* Liber II, 102, 103. If you wish me to weep, you must first feel grief yourself; then your sorrows will touch me.

Page 21, line 20. **Letters to Mrs. Dunlop.** Cf. "Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop. Correspondence now published in full for the first time with elucidations by William Wallace." 2 vols. New York, 1898. Cf. also extract from letter on pp. 34–35.

Page 22, line 12. **Virgins of the Sun. Knights. . . . Saracens. . . . Chiefs,** etc. Probably allusions to Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, Scott's *Talisman* and *Ivanhoe*, and Cooper's *Leather-Stocking Tales.*

Page 24, line 13. **vates.** Soothsayer, prophet.

l. 20. **Minerva Press.** A printing house in London, noted for the publication of trashy, sentimental novels.

Page 25, line 25. **Mossgiel.** A farm near Mauchline, about 118 acres in extent, on which Burns and his brother worked (1784–1786), and where he wrote many of his finest poems. **Tarbolton.** A parish in which William Burness, father of the poet, rented a farm during the last six years of his life (1777–1784).

Page 26, line 2. **Crockford's.** A fashionable gambling resort in London. **Tuileries.** A famous palace in Paris, begun by Catherine de Medici in 1564, burned by the Commune in 1871.

l. 5. **it is hinted that he should have been born two centuries ago,** etc. A probable allusion to the idea developed by Macaulay in his *Essay on Milton* (*Edinburgh Review*, August, 1825), that "as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines."

Page 27, line 1. **Theocritus** (3d century B.C.). A Greek poet; a writer of pastoral poetry, of idyls — "little pictures of life."

l. 3. **Council of Trent.** A council held at Trent (1545–1563), which condemned the leading doctrines of the Reformation concerning the Bible, original sin, and justification by faith.

l. 4. **Roman Jubilee.** A solemn festival of the Catholic Church, usually held once in twenty-five years. The year 1900 is a Jubilee Year.

Page 28, line 22. **Retzsch** (Moritz, 1779–1857). A German etcher and painter, who illustrated the works of Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare.

Page 29, line 4. **Boreas.** The north wind. **fell.** Keen. **doure.** Sullen, stubborn.

l. 6. **Phœbus.** The sun. **glowr.** Stare.

l. 7. **lift.** The sky.

l. 12. **burns.** Brooks. **wreeths.** Drifts.

l. 14. **bock'd.** Gushed.

Page 30, line 7. **thowes.** Thaws.

l. 8. **snaw-broo.** Snow-broth.

l. 9. **spate.** A sweeping torrent after a rain or thaw.

l. 14. **gumlie jaups.** Muddy jets.

l. 15. **Poussin** (Nicholas, 1594–1665). A noted French historical and landscape painter. He painted a picture called "The Deluge," to which Carlyle may refer, but which Ruskin in *Modern Painters* dismisses with a brief criticism as "uncharacteristic."

l. 22. **Smithy of the Cyclops.** Cf. Odyssey, IX. **yoking of Priam's Chariot.** Cf. Iliad, XXIV.

l. 23. **Burn-the-wind.** Blacksmith.

Note. **Fabulosus Hydaspes!** From the familiar Ode of Horace beginning "Integer vitæ" (Lib. I., Car. XXII.). The Hydaspes is a tributary of the Indus; on its banks Alexander defeated Porus (B.C. 327). It was called *fabulosus*, because it was in the far East, about which unexplored region numberless stories were afloat in Rome.

Page 31, line 23. **Defoe** (Daniel, 1661–1731). Best known to-day as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. **Richardson** (Samuel, 1689–1761). Called the founder of the English domestic novel.

Page 32, line 10. **red-wat-shod.** Wat means wet. The whole expression — wading in blood.

l. 17. **Professor Stewart** (Dugald, 1753–1828). A famous Scottish philosopher who held the chair of moral philosophy in

the University of Edinburgh. During the early years of his professorship he spent his summers at Catrine, on the water of Ayr, not far from Mossgiel; and there formed a friendship with the poet. Cf. note on p. 25, line 25. The passage quoted by Carlyle is to be found in Stewart's *Works*, edited by Sir William Hamilton. Edinburgh: 1858, Vol. X., p. cxl.

Page 33, line 2. **Keats** (John, 1796–1821). An English poet whose *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and *Eve of St. Agnes* one should read before assenting to Carlyle's harsh criticism. For a fairer criticism see Matthew Arnold's *Essay on John Keats*.

l. 18. **Novum Organum.** The title of Lord Bacon's greatest philosophical work, which was completed in 1620. The words mean "new instrument."

Page 34, line 19. **doctrine of association** — of ideas.

l. 22. **We know nothing**, etc. From a letter addressed to Mrs. Dunlop, dated Ellisland, New-year-day Morning, 1789. Cf. note on p. 21, line 20.

Page 37, line 6. **ourie.** Shivering, drooping.

l. 7. **brattle.** Fury.

l. 9. **deep-lairing.** Deep-wading. **sprattle.** Scramble.

l. 10. **scar.** Cliff. A steep, bare, rocky place on the side of a hill.

l. 11. **Ilk.** Every.

l. 15. **chittering.** Trembling with cold.

Page 38, line 1. **aiblins.** Perhaps.

l. 5. **Dr. Slop** and **uncle Toby.** Characters in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, — a favorite book of Carlyle's.

l. 11. **Indignation makes verses.** Cf. "Si natura negat,

fecit indignatio versum." — JUVENAL (Junius, a Roman satirist, 38–120), *Sat.* i. 79. If nature denies the ability, "indignation makes verses."

Page 39, line 1. **Johnson** (Samuel, 1709–1784). A biographer, essayist, critic, versifier, and lexicographer. He is reported to have said, "Dear Bathurst was a man to my heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a very good hater." — BOSWELL: *Life of Johnson.*

l. 13. **Furies of Æschylus.** Æschylus (525–426) is accounted the greatest of Greek tragic poets. The allusion is to his tragedy called *The Eumenides*, in which the Furies compose the chorus.

Page 40, line 17. **Cacus.** A giant and son of Vulcan, who, according to Roman mythology, lived near the spot where Rome was built. He stole from Hercules some of the cattle that had belonged to Geryon, dragging them backward into his cave under the Aventine, so that their tracks appeared to lead outward. But Hercules found them by their lowing and choked to death the thief, *incendia vana vomentem.* For the particulars of the story see Æneid, Book VIII., lines 190–267.

l. 18. **sturt.** Struggle.

l. 19. **Nimrods.** Nimrod was a mighty hunter. Gen. x. 8, 9. I Chron. i. 10.

Page 41, line 4. **Thebes.** The chief city of Bœotia. The fortunes and misfortunes of Œdipus, king of Thebes, and his race, furnished many themes for the tragic poets. **Pelops' line.** This line included Atreus, Agamemnon, Orestes, and Ephigenia. Cf. Milton's lines in *Il Penseroso:* —

"Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In septred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine."

Page 43, line 9. **he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale.** Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) and Johann Karl August Musäus (1735–1787) were German authors; the former was a poet and critic; the latter was noted chiefly for his *Folk-Tales of the Germans*. About three years before writing the *Essay on Burns*, Carlyle was engaged in translating representative works of both (cf. Introduction, p. xxii.). The translations, together with an essay on each by Carlyle, constitute Vol. I. of the *German Romances*, from which the following passages are quoted, in order that those who are not "our German readers" may feel in some degree the force of the distinction between the two authors: "A very slight power of observation will suffice to convince us that Tieck is no ordinary man; but a true Poet, a Poet *born* as well as *made*. . . . He is no mere observer and compiler; rendering back to us, with additions or subtractions, the Beauty which existing things have of themselves presented to him; but a true Maker, to whom the actual and external is but the *excitement* for ideal creations, representing and ennobling its effects." Of Musäus. "His style sparkles with metaphors, sometimes just and beautiful, often new and surprising; but it is laborious, unnatural, and diffuse. . . . Musäus is, in fact, no poet; he can see, and describe with rich graces what he sees; but he is nothing, or very little, of a Maker. His imagination is not powerless: it is like a bird of feeble wing, which can fly from tree to tree: but never soars

for a moment into the æther of Poetry, to bathe in its serene splendor, with the region of the Actual lying far below, and brightened into beauty by radiance not its own."

Page 44, line 16. **raucle carlin.** Fearless old crone. **wee Apollo.** "A pigmy scraper with his fiddle."

l. 17. **Son of Mars.** A soldier.

l. 19. **Poosie-Nansie.** The name of the keeper of the alehouse.

Page 45, line 2. **Caird.** A travelling tinker.

l. 4. **brats and callets.** Loose women.

l. 12. **Teniers** (David, 1610–1690). A noted Flemish genre, landscape, and portrait painter.

l. 17. **Beggars' Opera.** A satirical opera by John Gay (1728). Cf. Century Cyclopædia of Names.

l. 18. **Beggars' Bush.** A comedy by Fletcher and others, performed at court in 1622. Cf. Century Cyclopædia of Names.

Page 46, line 17. **Ossorius the Portugal Bishop** (Osorio, Jeronymo, 1506–1580). Called the Cicero of Portugal.

Page 48, line 19. **Fletcher** (Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, 1653–1716). A Scottish writer whose chief claim to lasting fame appears to hang upon the following remark, which was made in a letter to the Marquis of Montrose: "I knew a very wise man that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation."

Page 49, line 25. **Our Grays and Glovers.** Thomas Gray (1716–1771) is best known as the writer of *The Elegy in a Country Churchyard.* For a fairer estimate of his work, see

Matthew Arnold's *Essay on Thomas Gray*. Richard Glover (1712–1785). Cf. Gosse, *Eighteenth Century Literature*.

Page 50, line 4. **Goldsmith** (Oliver, 1728–1774). Compare his verses with those of Pope, for example, or his *Vicar of Wakefield* with Johnson's *Rasselas*, to find out why he was an "exception."

l. 5. **Johnson.** Cf. note on p. 39, line 1. The **Rambler** was a semi-weekly, issued 1750–1752 and following in the track of Addison's and Steele's *Spectator*. The Latinized style of the essays in the **Rambler** is noted for its studied avoidance of common English words. **Rasselas** (1759) is a romance, the scene of which is laid in the Orient.

l. 16. **Boston** (Thomas, 1676–1732). A noted Scotch Presbyterian divine. He wrote *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* in 1720.

l. 24. **Lord Kames** (Henry Home, 1696–1782). A Scottish judge and philosophical writer; author of *Elements of Criticism*.

Page 51, line 1. **Hume** (David, 1711–1776). A Scottish philosopher and historian. See the last two paragraphs of Carlyle's *Essay on Boswell's Johnson* for an interesting comparison between Hume and Johnson. **Robertson** (William, 1721–1793). A Scottish historian and clergyman. **Smith** (Adam, 1723–1790). A celebrated Scottish political economist, — one of the founders of the science. His chief work is *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).

l. 11. **Racine** (Jean Baptiste, 1639–1699). A French tragic poet. **Voltaire** (François Marie Arouet de, 1694–1778). A French poet, essayist, and critic. **Batteux** (Charles, 1713–1780). A French critic, chiefly noted as a writer on esthetics.

Boileau-Despréaux (Nicholas, 1636–1711). A French critic, satirist, and poet.

l. 13. **Montesquieu** (Baron de la Brède et de, *Charles de Secondat*, 1689–1755). A French philosopher. **Mably** (Gabriel Bonnot, Abbé de, 1709–1785). A French publicist.

l. 15. **Quesnay** (François, 1694–1774). A French political economist; founder of the school of physiocrats. Adam Smith's indebtedness to Quesnay is denied by John Rae in his *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 215. London, 1895.

l. 19. **La Flèche.** A town in the department of Sarthe, France, on the Loire, where Hume spent three years. He describes himself as wandering about there "in solitude, dreaming the dream of his philosophy"; and there he composed his first work, the *Treatise of Human Nature.*

Page 54, line 3. **A wish,** etc. From his epistle *To the Guidwife of Wauchope House.*

l. 10. **bear.** Barley.

Page 55, l. 22. **he never attains to any clearness regarding himself,** etc. Yet in his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore (which is quoted in Currie's *Life*) he wrote: "It was ever my opinion that the great, unhappy mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance or mistaken notions of themselves. To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself, alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design, where she seemed to have intended the various *lights* and *shades* in my character."

l. 23. **he never ascertains his peculiar aim.** In the same autobiographical letter, from which a quotation was made above, are the following sentences: "The great misfortune of my life was never to have an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labor. The only two doors by which I could enter the fields of fortune were — the most niggardly economy or the little chicaning art of bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it; the last — I always hated the contamination of its threshold!" Are any of the statements made by Carlyle and Burns in regard to the self-knowledge and lack of aim of the latter inconsistent?

Page 59, line 19. **priest-like father.** Cf. *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

Page 60, line 15. **in glory and in joy**, etc. From Wordsworth's *Leech Gatherer*, stanza vii.; quoted also by Lockhart on the title-page of the *Life of Burns.*

Page 63, line 11. **passions raging like demons**, etc. "My passions, when once they were lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet!" Written with reference to about the time of his twenty-third year. — Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore.

Page 64, line 3. **hungry Ruin has him in the wind.** Quoted by Burns as a reason for engaging a passage in the first ship that was to sail for Jamaica. — Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore.

l. 7. **the gloomy night is gathering fast**, etc. The first line of the poem entitled *Farewell to Ayr*, of which Carlyle quotes the last four lines, substituting "Adieu, my native banks of Ayr," for "Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr."

"I had for some time been skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised, ungrateful people had uncoupled the merciless legal pack at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed a song, 'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' which was to be the last effort of my muse in Caledonia, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by rousing my poetic ambition. His idea, that I would meet with every encouragement for a second edition, fired me so much that away I posted for Edinburgh without a single acquaintance in town, or a single letter of recommendation in my pocket." — Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore.

Page 65, line 3. **Rienzi** (Nicolo Gabrini, 1313–1354) headed a revolt against the oligarchs of Rome and sought to reëstablish the Republic. His head was turned by sudden success. Resorting to violence to raise funds, he lost his popularity, and was put to death by a mob.

Page 67, line 5. **Virgilium vidi tantum.** Ovid: Tristia IV. 10, line 51. I have at least *seen* Virgil.

Page 68, line 13. **Langhorne** (John, 1735–1779). An English clergyman and poet. For some of his poems see Chambers' Cyclopædia of English Literature. In quoting, Scott appears to have substituted "mother wept" for "parent mourned."

l. 23. **Nasmyth's picture.** See frontispiece.

Page 70, line 12. **in malam partem.** Disparagingly.

Page 76, line 2. **Mæcenases.** Mæcenas was a wealthy Roman of the equestrian order, who was a friend and patron of Horace and Virgil. His name has become a synonym for a liberal patron of letters.

Page 78, line 14. **Jacobin.** Literally, a member of the club of radical political agitators who took their name from the Jacobin Convent in which they held their secret meetings during the French Revolution.

Page 79, line 25. **corn-bing.** Heap of grain.

Page 80, line 3. **linking.** Walking smartly.

Page 82, line 1. **as a volunteer.** Cf. Burns's poem, *The Dumfries Volunteers.*

Page 85, line 24. **Patronage . . . twice cursed, etc.** Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, IV. i. 177.

Page 87, line 23. **fardels of a weary life, etc.** Fardels—burdens. Cf. the famous soliloquy, *Hamlet*, III. i., in which are to be found the words,

> "who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life," etc.

Page 88, line 13. **Roger Bacon (1219–1294).** An English Franciscan monk and philosopher, who was imprisoned because of his heretical writings. **Galileo (1564–1642).** A famous Italian astronomer, whose doctrines were condemned by the Pope, and who was forced by the Inquisition to abjure the Copernican theory.

l. 14. **Tasso (Torquato, 1544–1595).** An Italian poet.

l. 15. **Camoens** (Luiz de, 1524–1580). **The greatest Portuguese poet.**

Page 91, line 18. **Locke** (John, 1632–1704). **An English philosopher and political writer.**

Page 92, line 2. **Araucana.** Written by Alonso de Ercilla y Zuñiga (1533–1595), a Spanish soldier and poet. The epic is based upon his experiences as a soldier: he took an active part in a campaign against the Araucanos, an Indian tribe in South America.

Page 93, line 23. **Rabelais** (François, 1495–1553). **A brilliant, but sceptical French satirist.**

Page 95, line 5. **Jean Paul,** *Johann Paul Friedrich Richter* (1763–1825), a German poet and philosopher, introduced to the English public by Carlyle's *Essay on Richter* (1827).

Page 96, line 17. **Byron.** For further light on the point under discussion, cf. Morley's *Essay on Carlyle* — "Mr. Carlyle's victory over Byronism," and Matthew Arnold's *Essay on Byron.*

Page 98, line 18. **words of Milton,** etc. "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." — MILTON: *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642).

Page 100, line 6. **Plebiscita. Laws enacted by the common people.**

Page 101, line 6. Ramsgate. A popular seaside resort in Kent, about sixty miles east of London.

l. 7. **Isle of Dogs.** A peninsula of the Thames, three and a half miles east of St. Paul's, London, where the king's hounds were once kept.

l. 17. **Valclusa Fountain.** The fountain is associated with the poet Petrarch, who made his home in Valcluse, a village about ten miles east of Avignon.

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GLOSSARY

A', *all.*
Abeigh, *at a shy distance.*
Aboon, *above.*
Acquent, *acquainted.*
Ae, *one.*
Aften, *often.*
A-gley, *off the right line.*
Aiblins, *perhaps.*
Ain, *own.*
Airt, *direction, the point from which the wind blows.*
Amaist, *almost.*
Amang, *among.*
Ance, *once.*
Ane, *one.*
Asklent, *aslant.*
Aught, *eight.*
Auld, *old.*

Baggie (dim. of *bag*), *the stomach.*
Bairns, *children.*
Bairntime, *a family of children.*
Baith, *both.*
Bardie, dim. of *bard.*
Bear, *barley.*
Beet, *to add fuel to a fire.*
Beld, *bald.*
Belyve, *by and by.*
Ben, *through, into the spence or parlor.*
Biel, *a habitation.*
Bield, *shelter.*
Big, *to build.*
Bing, *heap of corn, potatoes, etc.*
Birk, *the birch.*
Birkie, *a spirited fellow.*
Blate, *shamefaced.*
Blaw, *to blow.*
Bleer't, *bleared.*
Blin', *blind.*
Bluid, *blood.*
Bocked, *vomited.*
Bonie, *beautiful.*
Brae, *the slope of a hill.*
Braid, *broad.*
Braing't, *reeled forward.*
Brattle, *a short race; hurry; fury.*
Braw, *handsome.*
Breastit, *did spring up or forward.*
Brent, *straight, smooth, unwrinkled.*

Brig, *bridge.*
Brooses, *races at country weddings, who shall first reach the bridegroom's house on returning from church.*
Buirdly, *strong, imposing looking, well-knit.*
Bure, *bore, did bear.*
Burn, *stream.*
Burnewin, i.e. *burn the wind, a blacksmith.*

Ca', *to drive.*
Ca'd, *named.*
Caird, *tinker.*
Canna, *cannot.*
Cannie, *careful.*
Cantie, *in high spirits, merry.*
Cape-stane, *cope-stone.*
Carlin, *an old woman.*
Cauld, *cold.*
Chittering, *trembling with cold.*
Claes, *clothes.*
Clips, *shears.*
Clout, *a patch.*
Cog, *a wooden dish.*
Coila, *from Kyle, a district of Ayrshire, so called, saith tradition, from Coil, or Coila, a Pictish monarch.*
Coof, *fool.*
Coost, *did cast.*
Corn't, *fed with oats.*
Crack, *converse, gossip.*
Cranreuch, *hoar frost.*
Craw, *to crow.*
Croon, *a hollow and continued moan.*
Crouse, *gleeful.*

Daimen-icker, *an ear of corn now and then.*
Daur't, *dared.*
Daurk, *a day's labor.*
Deil, *devil.*
Dine, *dinner-time.*
Donsie, *unlucky.*
Doure, *stubborn.*
Dow, *do, can.*
Dowie, *low-spirited.*
Dribble, *drizzle.*
Driegh, *tedious.*
Droop-rumpl't, *that droops at the crupper.*
Drumly, *muddy.*

Ee, *eye.*
Een, *eyes.*
Eydent, *diligent.*

Fairin, *a present, a reward.*
Fause, *false.*
Fell, *keen, biting; nippy, tasty*
Fetch't, *pulled intermittently.*
Fidge, *to fidget.*
Fier, *brother, friend.*
Fittie-lan, *the near horse of the hindmost pair in the plough.*
Fleech'd, *supplicated.*
Fleesh, *a fleece.*

Flichterin', *fluttering.*
Fliskit, *fretted.*
Flit, *remove.*
Foggage, *a second growth of grass, aftergrass.*
Forbye, *besides.*
Fou, *full, tipsy; a bushel.*
Frae, *from.*

Gae, *go.*
Gar, *to make.*
Gat, *got.*
Gaun, *going.*
Gear, *wealth, goods.*
Gie, *give.*
Glaizie, *glittering, smooth, like glass.*
Glowr, *stare.*
Gowan, *the daisy.*
Gowd, *gold.*
Grat, *wept.*
Gree, *a prize.*
Guid, *good.*
Guid-willie, *with hearty good will.*
Gumlie, *muddy, discolored.*

Ha' Bible, *hall-Bible.*
Hae, *have.*
Haffets, *the temples.*
Hafflins, *partly.*
Hain'd, *spared, saved.*
Hald, *an abiding-place.*
Hallan, *a particular partition wall in a cottage.*
Hame, *home.*
Hamely, *homely.*
Hansel, *a gift for a particular season, or the first money on any particular occasion.*
Hastit, *hasted.*
Hawkie, *cow.*
Heapit, *heaped.*
Histie, *dry, barren.*
Hizzie, *hussy.*
Hoble, *to hobble.*
Hodden-gray, *woollen cloth of a coarse quality, made by mingling one black fleece with a dozen white ones.*
Hotch'd, *fidgeted.*
Howe, *a hollow or dell.*
Howe-backit, *sunk in the back.*
Hoyte, *to amble crazily.*

Ilk, *every.*
Ingle, *the household fire.*

Jauk, *to dally, to trifle.*
Jaups, *splashes.*
Jinker, *that turns quickly, a dodger.*

Kebbuck, *a cheese.*
Ken, *know.*
Ket, *a hairy, matted fleece.*
Knaggie, *like knags, or points of rock.*
Knowe, *a hillock, a knoll.*
Kye, *cows.*

Lairing, *wading and sinking in snow or mud.*
Laith, *loth.*
Laithfu', *bashful.*
Lane, *alone.*
Lanely, *lonely.*
Lap, *did leap.*
Lave, *the rest.*
Laverock, *the lark.*
Lift, *sky.*
Linkin, *tripping.*
Linn, *a waterfall.*
Lint, *flax.* Sin lint was i' the bell, *since flax was in flower.*
Lowping, *leaping.*
Lyart, *gray.*

Maun, *must.*
Mavis, *the thrush.*
Meere, *a mare.*
Melder, *corn or grain of any kind sent to the mill to be ground.*
Mense, *good manners.*
Minnie, *mother.*
Mony, *many.*
Muckle, *great, big.*

Na', *not.*
Naething, *nothing.*
Neibor, *neighbor.*

Ony, *any.*
Or, *is often used for ere, before,* p. 123.
Ourie, *shivering.*
Owre, *over.*

Paidl't, *paddled.*
Parritch, *oatmeal boiled in water, stirabout.*
Pattle, *a small spade to clean the plough.*
Pleugh, *plough.*
Pow, *the head, the skull.*
Pu', *to pull.*

Rair, *to roar.* Wad rair't, *would have roared.*
Rape, *a rope.*
Raucle, *fearless.*
Rax, *to stretch.*
Reestit, *stood restive.*
Remead, *remedy.*
Rig, *a ridge.*
Rin, *run.*
Ripp, *a handful of unthrashed corn.*
Riskit, *made a noise like the tearing of roots.*
Rowe, *roll.*
Rung, *cudgel.*

Sae, *so.*
Sair, *sore.*
Saugh, *the willow.*
Saumont-coble, *salmon fishing-boat.*
Saut, *salt.*

Sax, *six.*
Scar, *a precipitous bank of rock or earth.*
Shaw, *show.*
Sic, *such.*
Simmer, *summer.*
Skeigh, *high-mettled, proud, saucy.*
Skriegh, *to scream.*
Slee, *shy.*
Sleekit, *sleek.*
Slypet, *slipped.*
Smoor'd, *smothered.*
Snaw broo, *melted snow.*
Snell, *bitter, biting.*
Snoov't, *went smoothly.*
Sonsie, *jolly, comely.*
Sowpe, *a small quantity of anything liquid.*
Spate, *a sweeping torrent after a rain or thaw.*
Spean, *to wean.*
Spence, *the country parlor.*
Spier, *to ask, to inquire.*
Sprattle, *to struggle.*
Spritty, *full of speets — tough-rooted plants something like rushes.*
Stacher, *stagger, walk unsteadily.*
Staggie, dim. of *stag.*
Stane, *stone.*
Stank, *a pool or pond.*
Stark, *strong.*
Staw, *did steal.*
Steeve, *firm, compacted.*
Sten't, *reared.*
Steyest, *steepest.*
Stibble, *stubble.*
Stimpart, *an eighth part of a Winchester bushel.*
Stoure, *dust.*
Sturt, *struggle.*
Sugh, *a rushing sound.*
Swank, *stately.*
Swats, *ale.*
Syne, *since, then.*

Tawie, *that allows itself peaceably to be handled.*
Tawted, *matted, uncombed.*
Tentie, *heedful.*
Thegither, *together.*
Thole, *to suffer, to endure.*
Thowes, *thaws.*
Thrave, *twenty-four sheaves of corn, including two shocks.*
Timmer, *timber.*
Tint, *lost.*
Tips, *rams.*
Tocher, *marriage portion.*
Towmond, *a twelvemonth.*
Toyte, *to totter.*
Trickie, *tricksy.*
Tyke, *a vagrant dog.*

Unco, *very.*
Uncos, *strange things, news of the country-side.*

Wa', *a wall.*
Wad, *would.*
Wanchancie, *unlucky.*
Warld, *world.*
Warst, *worst.*
Wat, *wot, know.*
Wattle, *a wand.*
Waught, *a copious drink.*
Waur, *to fight, to defeat.*
Weel, *well.*
Weet, *wet, dew.*
Wha, *who.*
Whaizle, *to wheeze.*
Wham, *whom.*
Willie-waught, *a hearty draught.*
Win', *wind.*
Wintle, *to stagger, to reel.*
Wreeths, *drifts.*

Yird, *the earth.*
Yont, *beyond.*
Yowe, *ewe.*

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